

Document Name	Procurement of Live Animals Used in Animal-Based Science
Document Number	ACC.POL.008
Origin	Research Office Committee on Animal Use and Welfare (CAUW)
Authority	Vice-President Academic and Provost
Effective Date	July 2023
Review/Retirement Date	2026
Responsibility for Revision	Research Ethics and Compliance Officer
Responsibility for Implementation	Associate Vice-President Research

1) Purpose

Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU) implemented this policy to ensure that all animals used in teaching, research and/or display are consistently procured, transported, and housed in alignment with current Regulatory Requirements for Animal Procurement, institutional policies, and approved Animal Use Protocols (AUPs).

2) Scope

This policy pertains to the procurement of animals for animal-based science by authorized* PIs and their designates within the MSVU Research Community.

**Authorized means that the PIs or their designates have a current approved Animal Care Committee protocol*

3) Responsibilities and Oversight

The MSVU/SMU Joint Animal Care Committee (ACC or “Committee”) ultimately reports to the SMU VPAR and MSVU AVPR, and has the responsibility to ensure that all animal acquisition and tracking at the institution is conducted in accordance with, at minimum,

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the Policies and Guidelines of the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) as amended from time to time, institutional policies and procedures, and any regulatory agencies like CFIA for certain transfers and shipment.

It must also be readily demonstrated that animal procurement is conducted with proper oversight and only with live and up-to-date records of acquisition and tracking. At the annual general meeting of the ACC in Fall, the Animal Care Facility Manager can prepare and present a report on animal procurement and tracking for the year.

4) CCAC Guidelines

The summary below are required Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) guidelines on procurement of animals and is adopted directly from the [Guidelines on: Procurement of Animals used in Science](#) with some adaptation to MSVU's animal research ecosystem.

All MSVU animal users are required to adhere to these guidelines.

Overview

- The use of animals in science is acceptable only if it contributes to the understanding of fundamental biological or behavioural principles, or to knowledge that can be expected to benefit humans or animals.
- Investigators must use the smallest number of animals necessary to obtain valid information.
- Prior to arranging for procurement of animals, investigators must ensure that the facilities and expertise are available to care for the animals.
- Where possible, institutions should strive to ensure the animals have a defined health status.
- The institutional veterinarian should have ultimate responsibility for ensuring procurement of healthy animals.
- The acquisition of animals must be dependent upon the prior approval of the project by the animal care committee.
- Acquisition of animals must follow federal and provincial/territorial regulations, and facilities must comply with all applicable regulations for identification of animals.

- Prior to procurement of animals, consideration should be given to the type of animals required, the ability to house and care for those animals, and any potential impacts on other animals in the facility.

Sources of Animals

- Appropriate documentation must be maintained for all animals procured by an institution or its investigators.
- Animals should be obtained from reputable suppliers.
- In-house animal breeding colonies should only be established when absolutely necessary, and should be efficiently managed, consistent with anticipated need and the principle of reduction.
- Preconditioned animals should be purchased whenever possible.
- In general, animals used for scientific purposes should not be obtained from pet stores or their suppliers due to the potential health risks associated with disease transmission and the potential health problems for the animals themselves.
- Animals subjected to invasive surgery must not be used in additional studies without explicit approval of the animal care committee.

Transportation

- Animal-specific Standard Operating Procedure for the transportation of animals should be developed by the institution, its investigators, or its employees.
- Those overseeing the transportation of animals must be knowledgeable about the specific container requirements, temperature, and ventilation of both the container and the environment during transportation, care of the animals prior to and during transport, and the requirements for labelling and documentation.
- All Standard Operating Procedures regarding the transportation of animals must include instructions describing emergency responses, in line with the mode of transportation to be used.

Receiving Animals

- Institutions receiving animals must be prepared for accepting the animals by providing proper facilities and appropriate handling by trained experienced personnel.
- Institutions should be responsible for ensuring records are kept for all animals received.
- Institutions should have Standard Operating Procedures for conditioning animals upon receipt that consider the species and background of the animals.
- After transportation and before use in any experiments, animals should be acclimatized to the experimental conditions.
- Quarantine areas should be subject to extra vigilance in monitoring the animals and in maintaining good records, to detect and respond to any health problems in quarantined animals.
- Duration of quarantine should be appropriate to ensure that the health of the animals under quarantine and that of the conspecifics already resident at the research facility is assured.

5) Policy

a) Procurement

- All animals to be used for research, teaching or display that come to MSVU from any source (e.g., commercial sources, other institutions, etc.) must be ordered or requested through the Associate Vice-President Research (AVPR) in writing. This request will only be considered after the Animal Use Protocol is accepted and approved by the Saint Mary's University (SMU)/Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU) Joint Animal Care Committee (ACC). Any special housing or husbandry needs of these animals must be indicated at this time.
- With the exception of animals from approved commercial sources, the arrival of all animals must be preceded by a health certificate that is no more than three months old. The certificate should show, at minimum, the results of a serological survey of the colony the animals are coming from. It should also include a descriptive statement of any known or suspected infectious health problems in that colony and that facility within the last year. The requirement for a health

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certificate is absolutely necessary to protect the health of the other animals in the facility and will require the investigator to plan ahead.

- iii) The acceptance of animals from infected colonies must be first approved by the ACC.
- iv) Under exceptional circumstances, animals without health certificates may be admitted with the approval of the AVPR and the ACC, provided there is quarantine space available.
- v) To ensure proper record keeping, the consulting veterinarian will inform the animal Facility Manager as well as the university administration when such exceptions are made. Once the animal care director decides (after consultation with the animal technicians) that the request can be fulfilled and the facility has available space or other necessary requirements, the director will order the purchase in writing or the animal transfer agreement, for the animal technician to carry out. This purchase order form will be the official P.O. university form, or the transfer agreement, and will require signature of the university purchasing officer as well as university official (AVPR or designate) for the request to be fulfilled. Any animals ordered by any other means will not be allowed on the University grounds. These policies will apply to all investigators utilizing the Animal Care Facility.

6) Acquisition and Tracking

Animals may only be procured for approved protocols where the source of animals is listed very clearly as the known supplier. To comply with CCAC guidelines, animals must be acquired through MSVU Procurement or via an appropriate Transfer Agreement to ensure they are acquired only for protocols that have been approved through the protocol review process, and to limit the numbers and species of animals acquired to the numbers and species approved. MSVU recognizes the importance of having standardized animal ordering procedures for protocol compliance. Therefore, all animal procurement is done by the Animal Care Facility Manager. The Facility Manager shall ensure that no orders are placed unless the designated area is able to provide appropriate space and care for the animals for the time period needed and for the number of animals needed.

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No procurement of animals may proceed until a fully approved protocol is provided to the PI by the ACC. No wildlife collection of animals may begin until all necessary permits are received by the ACC Coordinator and a fully approved protocol is in place. ACC approval must be in place prior to wildlife entering the facility. The ACC Coordinator will liaise with the PI to ensure that the facility can accept the animals.

All wildlife and wild caught procurement are ultimately tracked by the protocol review process and associated records with the ACC Coordinator. All necessary wildlife permits must be kept on record with the protocol file. Animal use data is recorded once per year and on file with the ACC Coordinator.

With the ACC oversight, the Animal Care Facility Manager is responsible for placing all transactions of animal procurement and the maintenance of all associated and necessary tracking records.

Upon receipt of (non-wild) animals, appropriate documentation must be received and maintained for all animals procured by an institution or its investigators. (can include, if applicable: date of birth/age or date of arrival at source, specific source, shipment date, shipping weight (if applicable), breed/strain, health status, etc.)

If health records are provided, these must become part of the protocol file and also form part of the tracking record with the AC Facility Manager. Filing of the health documentation at the receiving institution is mandatory.

Animals used for scientific purposes should not be obtained from pet stores or their suppliers due to the potential health risks associated with disease transmission and the potential health problems for these animals themselves.

Animals should be obtained through reputable suppliers only, who:

- provide the humane, safe, and timely supply and transport of healthy animals.
- can be recommended by other institutions who have had a positive relationship.
- provide detailed information on health status monitoring, breeding and health practices followed, as well as the conditions under which the animals were previously housed.
- provide housing facilities and to follow animal care practices equivalent to standards required by CCAC guidelines.

Name of supplier should be put on the protocol form under 'source of animals'

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if known Protocol number must be recorded with the supplier tracking information in AC Facility Manager's record.

Animals obtained from PIs at other institutions:

- PI must get protocol approval for this as the source of animals.
- If approval given, the shipper must provide health and history of animals; filed with protocol and copy kept with procurement records.
- A health certificate for the animals should be provided upon receipt and filed with the protocol and copy kept with procurement records.
- These animals should only be procured if they are suited to their intended use and to the conditions under which they will be housed, and they have not been subjected to procedures that would preclude their use.
- If this is a collaboration, then the requirements are those detailed in the Collaboration Guidelines; work done at two institutions as part of a single project.

Animals from protocol transfer (Other Studies) – internal institution:

- Must have protocol approval with source of animals explicitly listed as coming from another protocol and its number, before the transfer can occur. Any protocol history of the source animals must be part of the evaluation by the ACC before this is permitted. The final disposition information for the source protocol must reflect the transfer accurately.

Procurement (wild caught / field collection) of Animals from the Field:

- Protocol approval is needed with source of animals identified as being procured from the wild (give field work protocol if applicable) before procurement can begin. Permits are also needed before approval of protocol can be given.
- Research goals will generally dictate the appropriate sampling method; however, investigators should select the method that has the least impact on the animals and on the local ecosystem and is the safest for all concerned.
- Before initiating field projects involving capture, investigators must have obtained the necessary permits and must be familiar with the study species and its response to disturbance, as well as its sensitivity to capture and restraint.

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- investigators should be familiar with the advantages and drawbacks of available methods of live capture, particularly those that have been used with the study species.
- Investigators should ensure that the capture method used is effective and suited to the species and situation, will minimize distress and injury to the study animals, and will minimize capture of non-target species.
- the investigator should be trained in the correct use of the selected method or technique and should be able to ensure the prompt release of any non-target animal that may be accidentally captured.
- Investigators should also take measures to avoid the removal of animals with dependent young from the wild. The use of live lure animals should be avoided, but if they must be used, investigators are also responsible for their well-being and must take care to minimize their level of distress.
- Before initiating the capture of wildlife, consideration should be given to the fate of the animals following the study, and steps should be taken to ensure that the welfare of the animals and other practical issues, such as regulations, are properly addressed.
- investigators should observe and pass on to students and employees a strict ethic of habitat conservation and respectful treatment of the animals.

7) Compliance

Non-compliance is a serious breach of MSVU's [Policy on Responsible Conduct of Research](#) and may be investigated according to the [RCR Allegation Procedures](#), and, if found not to be in compliance, will face outcomes as described in the Policy.

8) Resources & Acknowledgements

This Document has been informed by the following relevant documents:

- CCAC *Guidelines on: Procurement of Animals used in Science* - <https://www.ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/Procurement.pdf> (Retrieved October 2020)
- Saint Mary's University – *Animal Acquisition and Tracking* (October 2020)

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- Western University - <https://www.uwo.ca/animal-research/doc/animal-procurement-policy.pdf> (Retrieved October 2020)

9) Document Modification History

Policy Number	Key Changes	Effective Date
ACC.POL.008	Review for content; addition of Acquisition and Tracking Section per SMU, update to hyperlinks; formatting for accessibility	July 2023
ACC.POL.008	Original Version	October 2020

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